

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 8

Issue 5 December 2005

Article 7

12-1-2005

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Recommended Citation

(2005) "Frederick Douglass Prize Awarded - Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 5 , Article 7.

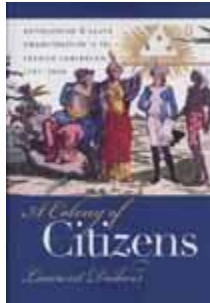
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Frederick Douglass Prize Awarded

Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition

Press Release by Gilder Lehrman Center; <http://www.yale.edu/glc/events/2005.htm>.



New Haven, Conn. -- A major study of the trans-cultural struggle over slavery and citizenship in the revolutionary French Caribbean is the winner of the Seventh Annual Frederick Douglass Book Prize, it was recently announced by Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition.

Laurent Dubois, associate professor at Michigan State University, will be awarded the prize for his book *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press). Focusing on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, Dubois explores the slave revolts there that brought about the 1794 abolition of slavery. His historical account sheds new light on the contradictory ways this emancipation developed, leading to its ultimate reversal in the early 19th century. On a broader scale, he examines how slaves-turned-citizens both experienced and shaped the transformations of the age.

The \$25,000 annual award for the year's best non-fiction book on slavery, resistance and/or abolition, is the most generous history prize in the field, and the most respected and coveted of the major awards for the study of the black experience. The prize will be awarded at a dinner at the Yale Club of New York on February 23, 2006, as the capstone of Black History Month

David W. Blight, director of the Gilder Lehrman Center, commented: "Laurent Dubois's *Colony of Citizens* is a complex, fascinating story of slave resistance in the Caribbean. The book is deeply researched in French archival sources, in ethnographical and anthropological sources and even in maps and imaginative fiction. With a focus on how the Haitian Revolution spread to Guadeloupe, Dubois transforms a seemingly local story into a much larger one -- about how the French Revolution itself was in part rooted in the slave systems of the West Indies. Dubois convincingly shows that slaves and free persons of color interpreted and converted republicanism to their own ends -- the claim of citizenship in the French empire -- only to have their freedom crushed again in re-enslavement."

Commented John David Smith, the Charles H. Stone Distinguished Professor of American History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and chair of the Frederick Douglass Prize jury: "Not since C.L.R. James in his *The Black Jacobins* (1938), has a scholar examined the broad nexus of revolution, slavery and emancipation as creatively and as powerfully as Dubois. *A Colony of Citizens* is a decidedly original, path-breaking

and incredibly well-researched work that positions slavery, emancipation, re-enslavement and then eventual re-emancipation in Guadeloupe within an international framework and suggests the complex fruits of emancipation in the French Caribbean and the Atlantic World."

"This gracefully written, carefully argued, and well-documented book has important implications that transcend the time period Dubois examines and the specific events he analyzes." Smith added.

Four other books were singled out as finalists: *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia*, by Claude A. Clegg III (University of North Carolina Press), *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s Through the Civil War*, by Melvin Patrick Ely (Knopf Publishers), *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port' 1727-1892*, by Robin Law (Ohio University Press) and *The Sounds of Slavery: Discovering African American History through Songs, Sermons and Speech*, by Shane White and Graham White (Beacon Press).

This year's winning book was selected from a field of nearly 70 entries by a jury of scholars that included Colin Palmer (Princeton University) and Deborah White (Rutgers University) in addition to Smith.

The Frederick Douglass Prize was established in 1999 to stimulate scholarship in the field by honoring outstanding accomplishments. Previous winners were Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan in 1999; David Eltis, 2000; David Blight, 2001; Robert Harms and John Stauffer, 2002; James F. Brooks and Seymour Drescher, 2003; and Jean Fagan Yellin, 2004.

The award is named for Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), the onetime slave who escaped bondage to emerge as one of the great American abolitionists, reformers, writers and orators of the 19th century.

The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, a part of the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, was launched at Yale in November 1998 through a generous donation by philanthropists Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Its mission is to promote the study of all aspects of slavery, in particular the Atlantic slave system, including African and African-American resistance to enslavement, abolitionist movements and the ways in which chattel slavery finally became outlawed.

In addition to encouraging the highest standards of new scholarship, the GLC is dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge through publications, conferences, educational outreach and other activities.